IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown below:

Claims 1-22 (canceled)

Claim 23 (currently amended): An attaching and removing unit of a lid for a wafer carrier comprising[[;]]:

a lid holding plate that can move forward and backward relative to a lid for a wafer carrier provided with a lock unit having a keyhole exposed outside the lid for a wafer carrier~~, on a side of the keyhole~~;

a driver for causing the lid holding plate to move forward and backward;

a key element protruding from the lid holding plate on a side of the lid in a pivotable manner, the key element disposed opposite the keyhole in a direction of the forward and backward movement;

a lid-detecting unit provided at the lid holding plate, for detecting whether the lid holding plate is holding the lid or not; and

a pushing member for giving a driving force to the lid in a direction of moving the lid away from the lid holding plate against the engagement of the key element and the keyhole,

wherein the lock unit is adapted to be locked and unlocked by the key element pivoting in the keyhole.

Claim 24 (previously presented): An attaching and removing unit of a lid for a wafer carrier according to claim 23, wherein:

the lid-detecting unit has:

a member to be detected whose position is changed dependently on whether the lid holding plate is holding the lid or not, and

a detector that detects a position of the member to be detected.

Claim 25 (previously presented): An attaching and removing unit of a lid for a wafer carrier according to claim 23, further comprising:

a controller that controls the key element in such a manner that control of the key element for returning to a starting-point thereof is not conducted if the lid holding plate is holding the lid, based on an output of the lid-detecting unit, when electric power starts to be supplied.

Claim 26 (previously presented): An attaching and removing unit of a lid for a wafer carrier according to claim 23, wherein:

the wafer carrier is placed on a movable placing part that can move in the same directions as the forward and backward movement directions of the lid holding plate by the driver, and

the movable placing part is connected to a second driver for causing the movable placing part to move, via a buffering member.

Claim 27 (currently amended): An attaching and removing unit of a lid for a wafer carrier comprising[[;]]:

a lid holding plate that can move forward and backward relative to a lid for a wafer carrier provided with a lock unit having a keyhole exposed outside the lid for a wafer carrier, ~~on a side of the keyhole~~;

a driver for causing the lid holding plate to move forward and backward;

a key element protruding from the lid holding plate on a side of the lid in a pivotable manner, the key element disposed opposite the keyhole in a direction of the forward and backward movement;

a lid-detecting unit provided at the lid holding plate, for detecting whether the lid holding plate is holding the lid or not; and

a biasing member for biasing the lid holding plate in a direction of pushing the lid, wherein the lock unit is adapted to be locked and unlocked by the key element pivoting in the keyhole.

Claim 28 (previously presented): An attaching and removing unit of a lid for a wafer carrier according to claim 27, wherein:

the lid-detecting unit has:

a member to be detected whose position is changed dependently on whether the lid holding plate is holding the lid or not, and

a detector that detects a position of the member to be detected.

Claim 29 (previously presented): An attaching and removing unit of a lid for a wafer carrier according to claim 27, further comprising:

a controller that controls the key element in such a manner that control of the key element for returning to a starting-point thereof is not conducted if the lid holding plate is

holding the lid, based on an output of the lid-detecting unit, when electric power starts to be supplied.

Claim 30 (previously presented): An attaching and removing unit of a lid for a wafer carrier according to claim 27, wherein:

the wafer carrier is placed on a movable placing part that can move in the same directions as the forward and backward movement directions of the lid holding plate by the driver, and

the movable placing part is connected to a second driver for causing the movable placing part to move, via a buffering member.